

**THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL MESSAGES AND
PRACTICES AROUND PUBERTY, IN CONSTRUCTIONS OF MASCULINITY
AND SEXUALITY IN YOUNG XHOSA MALE ADULTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR
HIV/AIDS INFECTION**

By

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Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text, this dissertation contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the dissertation.

This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the dissertation were approved by a relevant Ethics Committee.

Signed Date

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Abstract

This research explored the perceived impact of socio-cultural messages and practices around puberty, on constructions of masculinity and sexuality among Xhosa male university students aged between 18 and 24 years. This research explored how Xhosa men construct their masculinities and sexuality through identifying the key experiences and messages about manhood that they receive in puberty and by analyzing how their pubertal experiences and socio-cultural messages before and after circumcision influence the way they construct their masculinities. An understanding of how masculinities are constructed may be used to inform interventions around HIV prevention and help to understand what factors predisposes these males to high HIV related risk behaviours. This study used a qualitative research design. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, and analyzed with reference to Parker's approach to discourse analysis (Parker, 1992). The results show that socio-cultural inform how manhood is negotiated. The possibility of using traditional practices in fighting against HIV/AIDS is explored.

“Xhosa see the initiation- rite as a symbolic death, through pain and isolation from the community or society. This death brings forth new life and rebirth as a new being: a man who has outgrown everything related to his childhood. The new person is incorporated into society as a new responsible member contributing to its values and existence. After this process a person is expected to think and behave in a changed and constructive manner showing a transition from when he was a boy and all acts of antisocial acts were tolerated from him.”(Mayatula & Mavundla, 1997:p18).

Contents

Statement of authorship	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Abstract	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background on the Research of Masculinity	1
1.2 Research Objectives and Rationale	4
1.3 Brief Outline of Methods and Scope of Research	7
1.4 Outline of the research study	7
1.5 Key Terminology	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Masculinity	10
2.2.1 Definitions of Masculinity	10
2.2.2. Masculinities in sub-Saharan Africa	15
2.2.3 Masculinity and Xhosa Male Initiation	17
2. 3 Sexuality	19
2.4 Social constructions of masculinity and sexuality	23
2.5 Masculinity, sexuality and the body	26
2.6 Masculinity, Sexuality and Puberty	28
2.7 Masculinity, Sexuality and its Implications on HIV/AIDS	30
2.8 Circumcision and Implications on HIV/AIDS	33
2.9 Summary	37
Chapter 3: Methodology	40
3.1 Introduction	40
3.2 Research Problems and Objectives	40
3.3 Conceptual Framework: Social Constructionism	41
3.4 Qualitative Research Methodology	43

3.5 Sampling	44
3.6 Data Collection	46
3.7 Data Analysis	47
3.7.1 Applying Parker's Stages/Model of Discourse Analysis	48
3.8 Dependability and Transferability	49
3.9 Ethical Considerations	50
3.10 Summary	60
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion	53
4.1 Introduction	53
4.2 Messages about Masculinity and Sexuality	54
4.3 a man is never too young to start having sex- puberty as means for sexual competence	57
4.4 The cut penis as the symbol of masculinity: The circumcision discourse	59
4.5 A man takes risks: attitudes towards condoms and safety	62
4.6 A man should always have a just-in-case: isoka	64
4.7 Attitudes about masturbation and safer sexual practices	66
4.8 Summary	68
Chapter 5: Conclusion	
5.1 introduction	69
5.2 Conclusions	69
5.3 Limitations and Implications of The Study	69
5.4 Recommendations	71
	72
References	
Appendix A: Interview Guide	75
Appendix B: Consent Form	A
	B

